

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 A-01 AID-05

CCO-00 HA-05 OC-06 OMB-01 OPR-02 PC-01 CA-01

MCT-02 SCS-06 SY-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ACDA-12 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 /143 W

-----025043 311706Z /46

P R 311506Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1440

INFO:RUTAOU/AMEMBASSY COTONOU PRIORITY 213

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION GENEVA

USICA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 2079

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PEPR, GB, DM

SUBJECT: BENINESE SITUATION

REF: LIBREVILLE 2075 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

1. SITUATION A LYCEE DE L'ESTUAIRE CAMP OVER WEEKEND ALTERNATED BETWEEN MOMENTS OF TENSION AND PERIODS OF RELATIVE CALM. THERE WERE, HOWEVER, NO INCIDENTS OF SAME MAGNITUDE AS THAT REPORTED REFTEL SO FAR AS WE AWARE. AT TIMES, ARMY GUARD WAS HEAVY WITH TROOPS IN BATTLE DRESS AND UP TO THREE ARMORED CARS IN EVIDENCE. NO FRENCH WERE OBSERVED, AND FRENCH AMBASSADOR
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TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT NO RPT NO FRENCH TROOPS WERE CALLED OUT DURING INCIDENT OF JULY 28.

2. WEEKEND RUMOR THAT FRENCH SHIP WAS TRANSPORTING BENINESE BACK HOME TURNED OUT TO BE CORRECT. ACCORDING FRENCH AMBASSADOR DELAUNEY, SHIP LEFT OWENDO PORT (LIBREVILLE) MORNING JULY 31 WITH 420 BENINESE ABOARD. THERE ALSO DOCTOR, FOUR NURSES AND SMALL

SECURITY DETACHMENT. TRIP WILL TAKE ABOUT 40 HOURS AND QUESTION THEN WILL BE WHETHER KEREKOU WILL ACCEPT THEM. DELAUNEY SAID THIS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN. KEREKOU HAS ALREADY BEEN REPORTED AS SAYING RETURNEES MUST BE DAHOMEYANS, NOT BENINESE, OR THEY WOULD NOT HAVE LEFT COUNTRY. IF, HOWEVER, KEREKOU ACCEPTS THEM, FRENCH WILL APPARENTLY CONTINUE SEALIFT. ANOTHER VESSEL IS STANDING BY AT PORT GENTIL AND FIRST ONE WILL THEN PRESUMABLY RETURN. DELAUNEY ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT FRENCH ARE ALREADY BEING CRITICIZED BY BENIN, APPARENTLY PUBLICLY, FOR "COMPLICITY" IN THE AFFAIR AS RESULT OF MAKING SHIP AVAILABLE.

3. DELAUNEY CONFIRMED THAT TOGO WANTED NO PART OF AFFAIR AND THOUGHT THAT OTHER BENINESE NEIGHBORS FELT SAME WAS, ESPECIALLY IVORY COAST. HE SAID SOME 300 BENINESE HAVE MADE OWN ARRANGEMENTS TO RETURN TO COTONOU BY COMMERCIAL AIR, BUT HAD NO IDEA WHAT PRES. BONGO WOULD DO IF KEREKOU REFUSED SEALIFT (ONE WEEKEND RUMOR SUGGESTED BONGO WOULD SOLVE HIS PROBLEM BY NATURALIZING ALL BENINESE). MEANWHILE, GOG HAS APPARENTLY ORDERED NEW BLACK-OUT, ACCORDING LOCAL REPORTER FOR GABONESE DAILY L'UNION, ALTHOUGH L'UNION DID CARRY ARTICLE MORNING JULY 31 THAT GOG REP AT BELGRADE HAD SPOKEN AT NAM TO EFFECT THAT GABON WOULD MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT BENINESE ON GABONESE TERRITORY WITHOUT HAVING TO ACCOUNT TO ANYONE. REP SPOKE OUT ABOUT "CONSTANT PROCEDURE" OF BRINGING UP AFRICAN PROBLEMS IN FORA SUCH AS NAM "OVER HEAD OF OAU." GABON, HE ADDED, HAD CONFIDENCE IN OAU AS ONLY ORGANIZATION COMPETENT TO JUDGE AFRICAN PROBLEMS. ARTICLE CONFIDENTIAL

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CONCLUDED BY SAYING BONGO HAD VISITED LYCEE DE L'ESTUARIE JULY 30, AND HAD RECEIVED MESSAGE FROM SUDANESE (AND OAU) PRESIDENT NUMAYRI A PROPOS "L'AFFAIRE KEREKOU." (ANOTHER LOCAL RUMOR CIRCULATING IN LIBREVILLE HAS IT THAT BONGO WAS POORLY RECIEVED AT LYCEE.)

4. COMMENT: SITUATION, EXCEPT FOR FRENCH TRANSPORT, THUS BASICALLY UNCHANGED OVER WEEKEND. WE INTRIGUED BY REPORT IN BELGRADE 5551 (NOTAL) THAT LIBERIAN FONMIN DENNIS HAD ARRANGED COMPROMISE RE BENINESE BETWEEN FONMINS OF GABON AND BENIN AT BALGRADE FOR APPROVAL BY NAM (GOG FONMIN IS NOT THERE, BUT HIS SECRETARY OF STATE IS). THERE HAS BEEN NO INDICATION HERE OF SUCH DEVELOPMENT, AND WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING MORE EMBASSY BELGRADE MIGHT TURN UP ON SUBJECT. TIENKEN

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